

recent books serve as excellent marine mammal field guides, this book was intended for a wider audience and would make a nice addition to any library. You will probably find yourself looking through and marveling at the photos again and again, as I did.—MICHAEL FRITZ, See Life Paulagics, Seaville, New Jersey; e-mail: mike@paulagics.com

PARTNERS IN FLIGHT: NORTH AMERICAN LANDBIRD CONSERVATION PLAN. By Terrell D. Rich, Carol J. Beardmore, Humberto Berlanga, Peter J. Blancher, Michael S. W. Bradstreet, Greg S. Butcher, Dean W. Demarest, Erica H. Dunn, W. Chuck Hunter, Eduardo E. Iñigo-Elias, Judith A. Kennedy, Arthur M. Martell, Arvind O. Panjabi, David N. Pashley, Kenneth V. Rosenberg, Christopher M. Rustay, J. Steven Wendt, and Tom C. Will. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York. 2004: 84 pp. Available at no charge from www.partnersinflight.org.—The long-awaited *Partners in Flight* [PIF] *Landbird Conservation Plan* arrived with much fanfare, and deservedly so. This broad plan will serve as the starting point for bird conservation planning throughout the U.S. and Canada. A future planned revision will incorporate Mexican species, expanding the utility of the plan to the continental scale.

The plan starts with a description of how it was created and how it should be implemented, in addition to definitions of terms and various ranking factors. A total of 448 species that nest in North America are included. Landbirds are defined to include species in 45 families. These families include Cathartidae plus those within the following orders: Galliformes, Falconiformes, Columbiformes, Psittaciformes, Cuculiformes, Strigiformes, Caprimulgiformes, Apodiformes, Trogoniformes, Coraciiformes, Piciformes, and Passeriformes; 13 more families (including Tinamidae) will be added when the plan is revised to include Mexico. The plan also provides guidance on *Conservation Issues and Recommendations* for seven Avifaunal Biomes: Arctic, Northern Forest, Pacific, Intermountain West, Southwest, Prairie, and Eastern.

At the core of the plan are the PIF Species of Continental Importance, composed of 100

Watch List Species and 91 Stewardship Species. The Watch List Species were determined through Assessment Scores (from 1 to 5) of the Population Size, Breeding Distribution, Non-breeding Distribution, Threats to Breeding Population, Threats to Non-breeding Population, and Population Trend for each individual species. The Combined Score is determined by summing Population Score, the highest of the Distribution and Threats scores, and the Population Trend score, for a maximum of 20.

Species with Combined Scores of 14 and up comprise the Watch List; species with a Combined Score of 13 and a Population Trend of 5 were also added to the Watch List. Six species had Combined Scores of 12 and Trend Scores of 5, including Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*), Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*), Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*), Black-throated Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata*), and Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*). One species, the Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*), had a Combined Score of 11 and a Trend Score of 5, but no species had a lower Combined Score and a Trend Score of 5. A whopping 43 species that had Combined Scores of 13 and Trend Scores of less than 5 did not make the Watch List.

Several species rated the maximum score, including Gunnison Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus minimus*), Lesser Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*), California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), Thick-billed (*Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha*) and Red-crowned parrots (*Amazona viridigenalis*), Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*), Black-capped Vireo (*Vireo atricapilla*), Florida Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*), and Bachman's (*Vermivora bachmanii*) and Kirtland's warblers (*Dendroica kirtlandii*). This varied group includes species absent from the USFWS endangered species list (Gunnison Sage-Grouse, Lesser Prairie Chicken, Thick-billed and Red-crowned parrots), two species that were previously all but written off as extinct but present on the endangered species list (Ivory-billed Woodpecker and Bachman's Warbler), and species that are heavily managed endangered species (Califor-

nia Condor, Black-capped Vireo, Florida Scrub-Jay, and Kirtland's Warbler).

The Population Size Ranking Factor includes a Global Population Estimate, a number difficult to determine for most bird species. I find these estimates to be interesting and thought provoking, though I continue to be puzzled by the disparity in population estimates among species. The percentage of the population residing in the U.S. and Canada is also estimated, and, for many species included in the plan, $\leq 1\%$ of the global population nests in the U.S. or Canada. Expansion of the plan to Mexico will be critical to future conservation efforts. Although Population Trend information for each species is used as a part of the Combined Score, the information in the Trend Score is qualified by using the Monitoring Needs information. The Monitoring Needs identifies species for which trend data are lacking or imprecise, as well as species affected by poor survey coverage (e.g., those in boreal forests and far northern areas). The remainder of the species that lack an identified Monitoring Need have a qualifier, that while monitoring is considered adequate "some issues, such as bias, may not have been accounted for."

While it is easy to find fault with individual data points or certain aspects of the plan, the utility of the ranking process is evident in the results. Without debating which species are facing threats, what effect those threats might have on a population, or whether a Ranking Factor should be increased or decreased, the plan will be useful for achieving bird conservation at the biome, BCR, state, or habitat level. The plan is a starting point for all future bird conservation efforts. Partners in Flight has recently released revised ranking data for landbirds covered in this plan on the PIF Web site (www.partnersinflight.org). The *Landbird Conservation Plan* should be required reading for biologists and land managers as well as those interested in bird conservation.—MARY GUSTAFSON, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Mission, Texas; e-mail: Mary.Gustafson@tpwd.tx.state.us

FLIGHT IDENTIFICATION OF EUROPEAN SEABIRDS. By Anders Blomdahl, Bertil Breife, and Niklas Holmström. Chris-

topher Helm, London, United Kingdom. 2003: 374 pp., over 690 color photos. ISBN: 0713660201. £35.00 (paper).—Field guides to bird identification are no longer restricted to general guides on the birds of a particular region. Although this guide's coverage is restricted to the European region, it covers the specialized topic of flight identification of seabirds, a group defined here as including loons, grebes, tubenoses, cormorants, waterfowl, skuas, jaegers, gulls, terns, alcids, etc. The authors state that they were inspired by their study of large numbers of migrating seabirds along the Baltic coast of Sweden, but much of the information pertains to almost any non-tropical coast along the North Atlantic.

The guide opens with a solid *Basics of Field Identification* section. It is a good overview of the challenges inherent to watching fast-flying birds in oftentimes difficult conditions, and contains many cautions for the less experienced birder. The book stresses the shape, size, and flight style of birds in flight. The discussion of weather, wind, and light is helpful for those not used to scanning vast stretches of ocean. Although the next section listing 87 seabird watching sites in Western Europe is not very useful on the U.S. side of the "pond," it is a good guide for traveling North American birders.

Species are organized by functional groups: some by family, such as those in the section entitled "*Divers Gaviidae*"; others more informally, such as those in the section entitled "*Diving Ducks and Sawbills*." An overview of identification points is provided in each section, including marks that separate species from other groups or from other species within groups, and marks related to age and molt. A blue box on the overview page contains a bulleted list of field marks to note when attempting to separate species within the group. It stands out well for easy reference in the field as that fast-flying seabird goes whizzing past.

The individual species accounts are unique among field guides in that they stress identification in flight. A short opening paragraph describes the species' range and includes other commentary. The accounts contain the more-expected information under the headings *Size* and *Plumage and Bare Parts*. Size information is often presented with a compar-